

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T HONG KONG 1794

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CH US
SUBJECT: US/PRC RELATIONS: PEKING'S PERCEPTION OF THE NORMAL-
IZATION OF RELATIONS.

REF: HONG KONG 1310

1. IN LESS RESTRICTED CHANNELS WE WILL BE REPORTING CONVER-
SATIONS WITH PRC CADRE RECENTLY ON VARIETY OF SUBJECTS BUT
WHICH BUILD UP TO A HUNCH IN OUR MINDS THAT THE CHINESE IN
THEIR OWN CAUTIOUS WAY ARE TRYING TO INDICATE TO THE USG
THROUGH THE CONSULATE GENERAL AND TO CHINA WATCHERS GENERALLY
THAT THEY WISH TO MOVE AHEAD ON NORMALIZATION AND ARE
LOOKING FOR SOME RESPONSE. DEPARTMENT CAN JUDGE FROM ALL
ITS SOURCES WHETHER WE ARE READING TOO MUCH INTO OUR
OBSERVATIONS HERE. HOWEVER, WHETHER WE ARE INTERPRETING
CORRECTLY OR NOT WE SHOULD NOT TAKE THE CHANCE OF MISSING
A SIGNAL.

2. I HAVE ALSO BEEN CONCERNED FOR SOME TIME THAT BOTH WE
AND THE CHINESE MAY BE WORKING OURSELVES INTO A BOX OVER
THE QUESTION OF PRC REUNIFICATION OF FORCE IN SETTTLING THE
TAIWAN PROBLEM. THE CHINESE, BECAUSE THEY SEE NO SIGN THAT
WE UNDERSTAND THEIR POSITION IN PRINCIPLE THAT TAIWAN IS
INTERNAL CHINESE MATTER AND THEREFORE THEY CANNOT FORMALLY

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RENOUNCE ANY MEANS OF SETTTLING IT, ARE FORCED TO REPEAT
THE PRINCIPLE WHICH IN TURN CAUSES THE USG PROBLEMS BECAUSE
ELEMENTS QUESTIONING THE NEED FOR FULL NORMALIZATION SEIZE

THESE CHINESE STATEMENTS AS INDICATIONS NO AGREEMENT IS
POSSIBLE WITHOUT "ABANDONING" TAIWAN.

3. THEREFORE, I SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER INDICATING IN SOME INDIRECT AND UNOFFICIAL WAY THAT WE ARE NOT ABSOLUTELY INFLEXIBLE ON THE QUESTION OF FORMAL PRC GUARANTEE ON THE NON-USE OF FORCE. INFORMAL AND INDIRECT BECAUSE I ASSUME WE HAVE NOT YET REACHED THAT STAGE IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS WHERE WE WOULD WISH TO SAY SO FORMALLY; JUST HOW FLEXIBLE WE COULD BE FUZZED UP FOR THE SAME REASON AND BECAUSE WE WOULD PRESUMABLY LIKE SOME SORT OF COME BACK FROM THE CHINESE. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE EXERCISE WOULD BE TO INDUCE THE CHINESE TO STOP HAMMERING AWAY AT THE PRINCIPLE WHICH HAS THE EFFECT OF HARDENING THE POSITION OF BOTH SIDES.

4. THERE ARE VARIOUS WAYS SUCH A MESSAGE COULD BE PASSED. WHEN BILL GLEYSTEN OF EA WAS HERE A YEAR OR SO AGO, I MENTIONED TO HIM THE VALUE AS I SAW IT OF HONG KONG AS A PLACE WHERE WE AND THE PRC CAN COMMUNICATE RELIABLY BUT UNOFFICIALLY. SINCE THAT TIME, OUR CONTACTS HAVE EXPANDED BOTH IN NUMBER AND QUALITY AND I BELIEVE NOW THAT WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY HERE OF CONVEYING IN A MOST CAREFUL AND CONTROLLED WAY ALMOST ANY KIND OF INDIRECT MESSAGE, PARTICULARLY OF THE SORT SUGGESTED ABOVE. NATURALLY, THE LANGUAGE AND HANDLING WOULD HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT AND CONTROLLED FROM WASHINGTON IN RELATIONS TO WHAT IS GOING ON AT HIGHER AND OFFICIAL LEVELS.

5. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS THIS MESSAGE TO USLO.
CROSS

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NNN

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